or State Government Acts of Waqf Board and have been in existence for the last three years.

Reduction in the prices of NCERT books

3233. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Maharashtra has requested for reducing the prices of all costly NCERT books by atleast 50 per cent;

(b) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(c) whether it is a fact that there are large disparity in prices of text books published by the Maharashtra Text Book Bureau and NCERT?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The request from Government of Maharashtra is about reduction of prices of NCERT text books by as much as 50 per cent.

NCERT has intimated that it publishes its text books in three languages *i.e.* English, Hindi and Urdu. These books are being widely used by schools affiliated to the CBSE, in the Kendriya Vidyalayas, Central Tibetan Schools, Sainik Schools and also by some State Government in their Schools. The endeavour of NCERT is to publish quality text books at the lowest prices. The text books are brought out with colourful illustrations, on good quality paper and in sizes, which make them easy to read and attractive for the school children. It is also the policy of the NCERT to sell its text books, for classes I to VIII, at subsidized rates and recover the differential from the sale of books for classes IX-XII. It is relevant to point out that the prices of NCERT text books are much less than the prices of comparable text books published by the private publishers. It is also pertinent to mention that the Government of Jharkhand which has prescribed NCERT text books since last year has purchased all the text books at the prices quoted by NCERT.

In case the sale price of NCERT text books for classes I to VIII is to be reduced, it would be possible to do so only by bringing down their quality, which is neither desirable nor contemplated.